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The Penance of Magdalena

Other Tales of the California Missions

By J. Smeaton Chase

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California Missions

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And Other Tales of the California Missions

BY
J. SMEATON CHASE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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Foreword

AMONG the California Missions the southern group form a natural unit, just as does, geographically, Southern California itself — the region covered by the familiar California formula, “South of the Tehachapi.” It is thought that this little set of tales, extracted from the larger work, *The California Padres and Their Missions*, in which Mr. Charles F. Saunders and the writer collaborated, may be welcomed by those many persons whose interest in Mission affairs is more or less limited to the five here included, which are, probably, the most notable, historically and architecturally, of the whole chain of these venerable monuments of Franciscan zeal.

J. S. C.



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SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO



THE PENANCE OF MAGDALENA

SLOWLY, very slowly, the greatest and most beautiful of the Missions of Alta California had risen among the swelling *lomas* of the valley of the San Juan. Brick by brick and stone by stone the simple Indian laborers, under the tutelage of the Fathers, had reared a structure which, in its way and place, might not unfitly be compared with those great cathedrals of Europe in which we see, as in a parable, how inward love and faith work out in material beauty. Huge timbers of pine and sycamore, hewn on Palomar, the Mountain of Doves, many miles away, had been hauled by oxen over trackless hill and valley, to form the joists and rafters that one sees to-day, after the lapse of more than a century, firm and serviceable, fastened with wooden spikes and stout rawhide lashings.

In all these labors Teófilo had taken a principal part. As a child he had been christened with the name of Lucas, and had carried it through boyhood. But when about fourteen years of age, he had been transferred from the duties of a herder to learn the simple crafts taught in the workshops; and his industry and intelligence had so commended him to the overseers and Padre Josef that one day the latter, praising him for some task especially well performed, had said, half in jest, "*Hijo mio*, we must christen you over again. You are *excelentísimo*, as San Lucas said of San Teófilo in the superscription to his holy evangel; so I shall call you Teófilo, *excelentísimo* Teófilo, instead of Lucas; why not?" And Teófilo the boy became from that day, though Lucas he remained in

the record of baptisms kept in the tall sheepskin volume in the Father's closet.

So useful and diligent was the boy that the Father soon took him to be his own body servant, and many an hour did Teófilo pass handling with religious care the sacred vessels and vestments and books in the sacristy and in the Father's rooms. One day the Father noticed with displeasure that on the blank flyleaf of his best illuminated missal, lately sent to him by a friend in his old college at Córdoba, in Spain, there were some rough drawings in red and blue. Evidently the person who had drawn them had tried to obliterate his work, but had only partly succeeded. The Father could not help noticing, however, that, crude as were the formal floral designs and sacred emblems that had been copied by the culprit from the emblazoned letterings and chapter headings of the missal, the work showed undoubted taste and talent; and this gave him an idea. Why should he not adorn with frescoes, in color, the cornices, and perhaps even the dome, of the new church? It would be a notable addition, and would give a finishing touch to the beauty of the building, if it could be done. And here, evidently, was a hand that might be trained to do it — the hand, probably, of his favorite, Teófilo, for he alone had access to the book-shelves in the Father's room.

So when next he saw the boy he asked, "Teófilo, who has been drawing in my new missal?" The boy hung his head, and the Father, taking his silence as an admission of guilt, added, "That was wrong of you, Teófilo, and I must give you some penance to remind you not to do such mischief again. Do you know, boy, what that book is worth? Not less than twenty *pesos*, Teófilo, or even more. That is one year's wages of Agustín the *mayordomo*, so you can see such things must be left alone. But come to me this evening after the Doctrina, and I will set you your penance."

When the boy, with downcast look, came to him in his room that evening, the Father said to him, "What made you do it, Teófilo?" And the boy answered "I did not mean to do harm, Padre, but the pictures are so beautiful, and I tried to make some like them. Then I tried to rub them out, but they would not come off." The Father smiled indulgently. "No, my son," he said, "the wrong things we do, even innocently, do not come off. You must remember that in future. But they can be forgiven by the good God, Teófilo, and even so I forgive you for the book. And your penance shall be to come each evening at this time and learn to draw properly. What do you say?"

"Oh, Padre!" cried the boy; and he took the Father's hand and put it, Indian fashion, to his forehead in token of gratitude.

Agustín the *mayordomo* was, next to the Father, the most important man about the Mission. He it was who, under the priest's supervision, had charge not only of the labors and general governance of the Indians, but also of the business affairs of the establishment, even to the care and sale of the cattle, hides, and tallow, which, produced in enormous quantity, were almost the only, but a quite considerable, source of revenue to all the California Missions. Agustín was a half-breed, or *mestizo*, the son of one of the Spanish soldiers who had come to Alta California with Serra and Portolá. His mother was an Indian woman, to whom his father had been married by Father Serra himself. That was in 1776, the year of the establishment of the Mission, and Agustín, the oldest son of the marriage, had risen before the age of thirty-five to his important post, partly by natural ability, and partly by the fact of his mixed Spanish blood, which of itself gave him prestige and authority with the Indians. He had quarters adjoining those of the Father, on the main corridor of the *cuadro*.

His family consisted of his wife, Juana, chief of the *lavanderas*, or washwomen, and several children, the oldest of whom, Magdalena, was now growing into the fresh and early womanhood of these Southern races. Already she had lovers, who took such opportunities as the strict discipline of the Mission life allowed (and they were rare) to endeavor to awake a response in her heart. But she held herself aloof from all. Proud of the Spanish blood in her veins, though that blood was but that of a common soldier, she counted herself to be of the *gente de razon*, far above the level of the mere Indians, her mother's people. And, indeed, in her finer features, quick glance, and more spirited bearing, the difference of strain was manifest: the Latin admixture, though only fractional, justified itself in evident supremacy over the aborigine.

This proud element in Magdalena's nature had the unfortunate effect of bringing her into conflict with the Father and the Church. Not that she would, out of mere perverseness, have refused obedience, but the Father, himself a Spaniard, viewed all who were not of the *sangre pura* as Indians, all alike. This the girl felt and resented, and her resentment, though unexpressed, showed in numberless ways; while the Father, on his part, viewed her only as an obstinate Indian child, naturally averse to good influences.

It chanced one day that Agustín, overlooking the making of adobe bricks at the clay pits a mile from the Mission, needed to send a message to the Father on some point concerning the work; and, Magdalena having been sent to carry their midday meal to the brick-makers, he entrusted her with the errand. Failing to find the Father in his private room, she went to the next door of the corridor. It was half open, and she glanced in. The Father was not there, but she saw, bending over a table set against the window, a young man.

His back was turned to her, and he was so intent upon his occupation that he had not heard her step. She should have turned and gone, for the rules were strict, and forbade conversation between the girls and young men of the Mission: but her curiosity was keen to know what the Indian boy (as she knew he must be) was doing in the Father's quarters, and what it could be that kept him so absorbed. Moreover, a spirit of defiance was in her. If the Father found her loitering there he would reprimand her. Well, she would break the rules: she was no Indian; and if he caught her there she would tell him so. Yes, she would see what the young man was doing; she wanted to know, and she *would* know. Quietly she stole into the room and edged round to one side so that she could see partly across the table. The young man was painting, in wonderful colors, on a sheet of parchment, painting wonderful things — beasts, and birds, and flowers, and even angels, a wonder of wonders to the simple girl.

At some involuntary sound that she made, the young man — it was Teófilo — turned and saw her. Her eyes were fixed upon him, wide with wonder, and her hands half raised in childlike rapture, while her slender figure, so different from the heavier forms of the Indian girls, gave her, to his eyes, the look and bearing of one of the very angels he had been copying. It was a marvel on his side, too; and for a few moments the two regarded each other, while love (that is born so often of sudden wonder in innocent hearts) awoke and stirred in both their breasts. They had often met before, but it had been casually, and the hour had not been ripe. Now he saw her and loved her; she saw him, an Indian, indeed, but transfigured, for he was an Indian who worked wonders. And the Spaniard in her gave way, that moment, to the Indian, and she loved an Indian, as her father had done.

He was the first to recover his self-possession. "The Father

is not here," he said. "He will be back soon, for he set me my task until he should return, and I have almost done it." "Is that your task?" she asked. "How beautiful! How wonderful!" And she stepped nearer the table. "Show me, how do you make them? I never thought that Indians could make such things. I have heard my father say that holy men in Spain could make angels, but you are an Indian: how can you do it?" "I cannot tell you," he said slowly: then — "Yes, I will tell you," and a flush came on his dark face, and a light into his eyes, as he looked at her. "I do not make them, these angels; they come to me because the Father has taught me to love them. He says the angels come to those who love them, and any one can love them. And when I saw you," he went on, his eyes upon her eager face, "I thought you were the angel I was painting, for you are like an angel, too; and now I shall always love you, and it will be easy to paint. Listen! the Father is coming. You must go quickly, but now I have seen you I must see you again. You are Magdalena, Agustín's daughter. I shall find you to-morrow when I take the orders for the work to your father."

Magdalena slipped away, and thus was begun the short but happy love of Teófilo and Magdalena — short, like the history of the beautiful Mission itself; happy, as all love is happy, let its end be what it may. Many a time they met in secret, for sweet interviews or even a hurried word or glance; but love grows best in the shade. And meanwhile, the great church had been growing too, and now it was Teófilo's proud task to paint the frescoes on the walls and dome, as the Father had hoped. Simple designs they were to be at first, — floral emblems and the symbols used for ages by the Church, — but later Teófilo was to essay much more ambitious things, perhaps even the archangels, and San Juan, the soldier-saint, himself.

It was the winter of 1812, and Teófilo and Magdalena had loved each other for over a year, when Teófilo one day spoke to the Father of Magdalena, and said that he wished to marry her. For months Magdalena had tried to be dutiful and to engage the Father's interest, on her side, in their favor, in preparation for Teófilo's broaching of the subject to him. But she felt always that he remembered her old hostility, and that he still considered her a mere disaffected Indian of his flock. They had often talked of this, but Teófilo, who loved the Father for the special kindness he had always shown him, believed that he would agree to the marriage. Why should he not? he said. It would make no difference to him, and he, Teófilo, would work better than ever, to show his gratitude.

When at last he spoke of the matter, the Father peremptorily denied his request. Agustín's daughter was an obstinate, perverse child, and would only lead Teófilo away too. He would give thought to the matter, and would see what girl there was suitable for him, and then, if he wished to marry, well and good. He would give them two rooms in the corridor, near his own, and would allow him pay as his body servant and for his work, and perhaps other privileges as well. And that was all; for Teófilo knew that he would not be moved from his decision. Good man as the Father was, he had the Spaniard's failing in dealing with a subject race — a certain hardness arising from a position of authority not allied with responsibility — except to God, and that, indeed, the Father felt, but he conceived that his duty to his Indians, apart from his spiritual ministrations, was entirely comprised in the teaching, feeding, and just governing of them.

When Teófilo told Magdalena, at their next meeting, what the Father had said, the girl was enraged. "So he thinks I

am not good enough for you!" she cried: "And I have done everything to please him. But he is only a priest, and has no heart. Ah! those Spaniards, I hate them!" And then, with a woman's illogical turn — "Well, he shall see that I am Spanish too. We will go away to the Mission at San Diego, Teófilo. My father's brother is there, and I have heard my father say that he has influence with the priest. He will marry us, and you can work there as well as here."

But Teófilo was in doubt. His love for Magdalena and his love and reverence for the Father contended. He was a simple, guileless soul, and the thought of ingratitude to his benefactor was a misery to him. Some other way must be found: the saints would help them; he would pray to San Lucas, who, the Father had told him, was his patron, for he had been born on his day and christened by his name: and Magdalena must pray, too.

Magdalena, however, took up now an attitude of open rebellion, and absented herself entirely from the services of the Church. This was another trouble to Teófilo, and daily over his work he prayed to San Lucas, and pondered what was best to do. But days and weeks went on, and his inward disquiet began to take effect in his appearance and behavior. The Father, busy with the multitudinous affairs of the Mission, had entirely forgotten the matter of Teófilo's request: but one day he chanced to notice his favorite's listless air, and it recalled the affair to his mind. A day or two afterwards he said to Teófilo, as the latter was with him in the sacristy, "Teófilo, you are dull and not yourself. You were right, it is time you were married, and I have the very one for you. It is Ana, the daughter of Manuel, who works in the smith's shop. She is a good girl. I will speak of it to her father."

"Padre," said Teófilo, "I cannot marry Ana, nor any one else but Magdalena, for I love her. Oh, Padre," — and he

dropped on his knees before the priest, — “let us be married. You do not know, she has tried hard to be good, and to please you. And I will work for you all my life. I have been praying to San Lucas ever since I told you, but he has not done anything.”

The priest was moved by the earnestness of the boy — for boy he had always considered him, and indeed he was little more in age. “Well, *hijo mio*,” he said, “I do not know about that. The saints always hear us, as I have told you, and perhaps — who knows? — San Lucas may do something yet. Or, perhaps,” he added with a smile, “it is because we changed your name, and he does not look on you as his son. Well, that was my fault. But you say that Magdalena has tried to please me? Good, then we will see. I will set her a penance, for she has not behaved well; then I shall see if she wishes to please me. To-morrow will be a day of observance, and there will be early mass in the church. Tell Magdalena, Teófilo, that she must come to mass and carry a penitent’s candle. Let her be in the front row of the women. If I see her there I shall know she is obedient, and perhaps, yes, perhaps, — well, we will see about the rest.”

“Oh, Padre,” Teófilo exclaimed, “you are my padre, indeed;” and he put the priest’s hand to his forehead. “I know she will come, and I know she wishes to please you. And, Padre,” he said, “I have made a picture of the angels of La Navidad. I did it to please you” (he was about to add, “and Magdalena,” but prudence stopped him in time). “I thought — I thought —”

“Well, what did you think, *hijo mio*?” asked the priest.

“I thought, Padre, that if you liked it, and said it was done well, it would be fine on the high roof, Padre, the angels, four of them, in the middle of the roof: like this, Padre, see!” And he raised his hands in the attitude in which he had seen Mag-

dalena when she met him in the Father's room. "I could do it, Padre, if you like it."

"Angels, Teófilo!" said the Father. "Hm! I do not know. It is hard to paint the holy angels, and diligent as you have been, I hardly think you are an Angelico. But go and bring what you have done, and I will see. Indeed, it is just what I would have, but it must be well done, or it will spoil the rest."

The boy ran off, and returned quickly with a large sheepskin on which he had drawn in colors a really fine design: four angels in attitudes of worship, with uplifted hands, and eyes that expressed, crudely yet well, the wonder that the Holy Ones might well feel at the Miracle of the Manger.

"Ah, and did you really draw this?" asked the priest. "It is excellent, Teófilo; we must make a painter of you in earnest; perhaps we might even send you to Mexico to be taught by a good artist. There is one of the Brothers at the College of San Fernando who would train you well. I think this is what San Lucas has been doing for you, after all. But how did you do it, Teófilo? What did you draw from?"

"Padre," said Teófilo tremblingly, "I will tell you, but do not be angry. It was Magdalena. I saw her once, at first, and she was like that, yes, exactly like that, with her hands up, so. She was like one of the angels in your new missal, and I remembered, and drew it many times over, and — do you really think it will do for the church, Padre?" he finished eagerly, his face aflush with excitement.

"Yes, it is certainly good enough, Teófilo," said the Father. "We will have gold round the heads and golden stars on the robes, and San Juan's church shall be the finest in California. Though how it comes that the girl Magdalena can have been your model passes my understanding. Indeed, I think it is the good San Lucas, or San Juan himself, who has helped you. Well, you deserve praise, Teófilo, and perhaps some reward.

But go now, and tell Magdalena to come to first mass to-morrow, as I said. You may take a candle from the sacristy and give it to her."

That evening Teófilo told Magdalena all that had happened. But her Spanish blood was in hot rebellion, and in spite of her love and Teófilo's entreaties, she would not give in. To carry a candle, as if she were one of the Indian girls, caught in disgrace! No, it was too much. Why, the whole pueblo would see her, and laugh (which, indeed, was true for she had held herself above the girls of the Mission, and was not loved by them). In vain Teófilo told her of the Father's words about sending him to Mexico to become a real painter. No, it would be a victory for the Father if she gave in, and he should see that she was Spanish as well as he. And contemptuously she tossed the candle aside into the chia bushes in the courtyard, where they talked in the shadow of the arches.

It was with a heavy heart that Teófilo left her, yet with a faint hope that she might repent and come to mass in the morning. It was a dull, oppressive night, such as comes rarely in California, even in the summer heats. Teófilo slept but little, and twice during the night he got up from his bench bed and prayed to San Lucas, for this seemed to be the final chance for his and Magdalena's happiness, and after his interview with the Father all had seemed so bright that it was hard now to give up hope. Magdalena, on her part, slept not at all, but she did not pray. Instead, she lay with wide-open eyes in the darkness of her little windowless room, looking up at the low ceiling and fighting over in her heart the old battle of love and pride. One might say that love stood for the Indian and pride for the Spaniard in her, and that it was an incident in the old feud that began with Cortés and Malinche. And then she thought of what Teófilo had told her, how he had told the Father about painting the angels for the

church because he had seen her standing with upraised hands, like an angel, that day. Poor Teófilo! how he loved her! and how she loved him, too! It was hard, very hard, that there was so much trouble. How happy they might be! And he was so clever, and might be a real painter, not working in the fields or at the workshops, but only painting angels and beautiful things. And she was the cause, in a way, of his being so clever: she was proud of that, and the thought made her glow, simple Indian girl as she was, with a woman's sweetest thrill — he was clever because of her! Yet now she must spoil it all, and all for the Father's hardness.

But then, must she? — for she knew that it lay with her, after all. She could make all so happy — why not? Ah, but the humiliation! No, she could not. But could she not? The humiliation would soon be over, and the prize was so great. They might be married, and even at once. Yes and no, yes and no — so the fight went on, as the hours dragged past and the heavy air pressed upon her restless nerves and forbade sleep.

It would soon be dawn, and now she must decide. Then the thought came to her, should she pray to San Lucas, as Teófilo had been doing? Perhaps after all he would help them. She got up, and creeping quietly into the adjoining room, where her father and mother were asleep, she knelt at the little crucifix that hung on the wall, and tried to pray. But no words would come, and she was about to rise and go back to her bed when it seemed as if words were whispered in her ear, echoes carried in the brain from something she had once heard, no doubt, in the church — “*. . . levantó á los humildes . . . raised up the humble . . .*” She had noticed the words, because they were so averse to her ways of thought: the humble, why, that was like the Indians whom she had always despised. But, after all, perhaps that was San Lucas's answer;

for she saw that it would settle all her trouble. Well, be it so: she would be humble, if San Lucas told her; and she would obey the Father, and then, at last, all would be well.

She rose, and, remembering the hateful candle, went into the quadrangle and searched for it. There it lay among the chias, and she picked it up and carried it to her room. Light was dawning in the east, and she did not lie down again, but stood in her door, making up her mind to the humiliation she was to undergo for the sake of Teófilo and their love. She did not waver now; indeed, in her young, strong passion she gloried in the sacrifice she would make for love's sake. She dressed herself with care. They ate no meal that day before mass, which was to be at six in the morning. If only, she thought, she could tell Teófilo that she had resolved to do the penance, it would make it so much easier; but there would be no way of seeing him until they were at the service, and then the men would be on one side and the women on the other; so he would not know until he saw her, and perhaps he would not look, for she had said she would not go. Then a thought came to her with delicious joy: she would make up to him, and punish herself, for having refused, by waiting till the people were all in the church, and then going in alone, so that everybody would see her, and Teófilo would see what she could do for him.

Solemnly the great bell sounded out the summons to prayer. It was a special day, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and all were expected to come to mass, old and young. The morning was heavy and airless, and the people, rising from sleepless or restless beds, moved languidly and in hardly broken silence toward the church, and, entering, ranged themselves, men and women separately, on either side of the building, facing the altar. Teófilo was in his usual place, near the front, and on the margin of the open aisle that divided the

sexes. All had gathered before the bell ceased to sound, but Magdalena was not there. With a sinking heart Teófilo had watched, hoping against hope that she would repent and come. He saw Agustín and Juana come in, and Agustín go to the place near the altar which he held as *mayordomo*, while Juana merged in the crowd of undistinguished Indian women. So Magdalena was obstinate, and the prospect of happiness that had looked so bright yesterday was all over and spoiled. But he must not blame her: she was not just an Indian, like him. And with a sigh he ceased to watch the doorway and turned to face the altar.

The Father entered, and bent the knee before the altar in view of the congregation, who also had knelt on his appearing. The church was in darkness but for the illumination of candles about the altar and a gray and sickly daylight that came in at the open door. As the Father turned to the people there was a stir among the women who had taken places near the entrance, and a figure appeared, carrying a lighted candle. It was Magdalena. She walked steadily up the passageway between the men and the women toward the priest, who stood facing her. A black shawl was thrown over her head, and her face, pale with sleeplessness and trouble, and lighted by the candle she carried, seemed to glow against its dark background as if illuminated from within. Teófilo had turned at the sound of her entrance, and watched her as if fascinated during her passage up the aisle. She did not see him, for her eyes were on the ground: but she knew his place, for he had often told her; and as she came near to where he was kneeling she turned a little toward him, and murmured, so that only he should understand, "It is for thee, Teófilo."

As she came close to the altar step, the Father's eyes rested on her with a glance that seemed to say, "It is well, my daughter." Then he began the service, while Magdalena

knelt in the front row of the women. There was an unusual stillness among the people, for the incident of Magdalena's penance had not been known, and had taken all but Teófilo and the Father by surprise; while the sultry half darkness and the stagnant air seemed to add to the feeling of awe. So the service proceeded.

Suddenly, without warning, at the offertory, destruction broke. There came a shock; a pause of terror; another shock, that made the solid walls rock to and fro; a terrible cry, "*El temblor!*" and in panic the people rose from their knees and rushed toward the door. A third shock came, heavier than the other two; and cornices and masses of plaster began to fall.

At the first cry of the frightened people Teófilo had risen to his feet. He looked to where Magdalena had been kneeling, and saw her standing, still holding her penitent's candle alight in her hand. As the people rushed toward the door both he and Magdalena were almost carried away by the panic-stricken throng; but he made his way to her, and they two were for a few moments alone, but for the priest, near the altar. When the third shock came he threw his arms about her. She seemed to have no fear, nor had he. The spirits of both had been under strain, and one thing only had been in their thoughts for hours before, so that they were in great degree oblivious to the general terror. As Teófilo put his arms about her, a bright smile came on her white face, and she said, pointing to the candle, "It was hard, but I prayed to San Lucas, and he told me to do it, and now we can be married." The shock continued, and became more violent. Pointing to the candle she said again, "I did it for thee, Teófilo *mío*." As she spoke, there came a terrifying sound from above: the great stone dome above them parted, and looking up they saw for a moment the calm face of the sky through a jagged rent

in the roof; then the ponderous structure crashed down in ruin upon them and the huddled crowd of Indians that still struggled for escape.

They were found the next day, their bodies crushed together. In her hand was still the penitent's candle.

In one grave the Father, who escaped the death that fell that day upon twoscore of his flock, buried Teófilo and Magdalena; for, said he, making over them the Holy Sign, they were married, indeed, though in death. Still may be seen on the shattered walls and roof of the Mission church some faded, simple frescoings, the unfinished task and the memorial of Teófilo, the painter-neophyte of San Juan Capistrano.

SAN DIEGO DE ALCALÁ



PADRE URBANO'S UMBRELLA

PADRE URBANO, priest in charge of the Mission of San Diego, was in a bad humor. If he had been asked what was the most necessary article in the cargo of the supply ship Santiago on the first of her half-yearly visits in the year 1830, he would almost certainly have said, the umbrella. The candles were important, no doubt; so was the new altar-cloth, for the present one had become shockingly worn under the unskillful treatment of the Indian *lavanderas*; so were the seeds, all the more so because he had included in the list seeds for an onion-bed, and onions were a delicacy to which his soul had long been a stranger. And many others of the articles he had named in his requisition had passed from a state of shortage into one of absolute vacancy on the storeroom shelves. But foremost in his thoughts was the umbrella. He had specified it with care, — such an umbrella as he had used in Spain, before ever he came to this destitute and heathen land; the size, a *vara* and a half across; the material, silk; the color, yellow; and as the warm spring sun smote ever more fervently upon his tonsured head, his thoughts had daily turned with yearning towards the good, ample *quitasol* that was to shield him from the fiery persecutions of his enemy, the prince of the power of the air.

Well, the vessel had come that day, and with it the umbrella; and now, most cruelly dashing his long-cherished hopes, one of his Indians had stolen it! Moreover, to-morrow he was to start on his annual visitation of the outlying stations, and he had especially relied for comfort, on that long, hot, dusty round, upon the umbrella, — the fiend fly away

with the miscreant who had taken it! thought the Father in his wrath.

This is how it happened: The ship had sailed into the bay at early morning, and the lieutenant at the fort had straightway sent a runner up to the Mission with the cheering news, adding that the articles for the Father's personal use had been thoughtfully packed separately from the heavier goods, and the captain had obligingly kept the special package in his own cabin, so that it could be delivered to the expectant consignee at once on arrival. The Father had immediately dispatched two of his most trusted Indians, Pio and José, to receive the goods, which the captain had promised to have brought ashore in the first boat-load.

The sergeant who delivered the goods to the Indians, in order to make the unwieldy package easy of transportation by the two men over the two leagues of road that lay between the bay and the Mission, had unwisely opened it in the presence of the Indians, so as to arrange the contents in two loads. The men had each taken one of the bundles and started for the Mission. In due course, José had arrived with his load, but alone, and in explanation had reported that at a mile or two from the bay his companion had fallen behind — to rest, as he supposed — while he continued on his way. After a time he had waited for Pio to come up, but the latter had not rejoined him. José had left his own load by the roadside and gone back to see what had become of him, but no trace was to be found of either Pio or his burden. There was nothing for him, José, to do but to continue on his way with his own part of the Padre's property, and here he was. Pio would doubtless come soon with the remainder.

But Pio had not come, and the Father's fears, born as he listened to José's story, grew into angry certainty as hours passed and no Pio appeared. Examination of José's bundle

had revealed the altar-cloth, the ink, the sugar, the onion-seed, some books, and a few of the articles of clothing he expected, but the umbrella and part of the clothes were numbered with the missing; and though the clothes were not only valuable but much needed, somehow it was the umbrella that made the head and front of the crime in the Father's mind. Calling the Indians together after vespers, he announced the theft, denounced the thief, and pronounced his severest displeasure, with punishments proportionate, against any who should fail to do all in his or her power toward the apprehension of that ungrateful sinner, Pio.

Let us see what had become of the rascal from the time when he disappeared. He had really dropped behind to rest, as José had supposed; but while resting, the desire had come to him to look again at that strange thing in his package. What could it be? He had seen the sergeant take it out of the box, a long, thin object; then he put his hand somewhere on it, and pushed, and, wonderful! it had changed in an instant into a huge flower! Such a flower! Yellow like a sunflower, nay, like a thousand sunflowers, or the sun itself. Then he had done something again, and all at once it was as it had been at first. Talk about magic! All the things his father, old Klacquitch, the medicine-man, used to do were nothing to this. He simply must have another look at it, and now was his chance, while José, who might tell the Padre, could not see. He slipped the cords from the bundle and took out the thing of mystery. A long stick, with some yellow cloth rolled round one end: but how to turn it into the other wonderful thing? He could not resist trying, and he felt about the stick, pushing this way and that, as he had seen the soldier do, and — it began to open. He pushed again — it was done; behold the magic sunflower, beautiful, wonderful! And turning it round and round he feasted his eyes on it, the most astonishing

thing he had ever seen; yes, and done, for he, Pio, knew how to make the Big Flower open.

That is where the tempter caught him. What power that would give him over the other Indians! What was Kla-quitch, with his painted sticks and bones, compared with him, if only he were the possessor of this marvel! He should need no other stock in trade as medicine-man. The people would pay well to have it opened — that would be good medicine: and simply keeping it shut would be bad medicine: — delightfully easy! How did it shut, by the by? He fumbled at the stick, but it did not close: he pushed and pulled, it made no difference. He pressed on the cloth; an ominous creaking warned him that Big Flower objected to being shut by force, and threatened to break.

A nice fix he was in now: the genie he had raised would not down! He grew hot and cold by turns. José was far ahead by now: he ought to overtake him, but he could not appear before the Padre like this. He did not know what the purpose of the thing was, but most likely it had something to do with the Church, and he knew how strict the Padre was about even the handling of such objects. What should he do? The tempter had the answer ready, — there was only one thing he *could* do, — run away with the magic thing and be a medicine-man, as his father had been, only he would be a much more powerful and cunning one. Sly tempter! Poor Pio! He had only meant to nibble, and here he was, fairly hooked.

Well, since he was in for it, he had better get away before any one saw him. He caught up the clothes and the umbrella and hurried off into the brush. It was not easy for him to make his way along with the obstreperous load, and he soon discovered that the best way to manage the umbrella was to carry it over his head. Very comforting he found it, too, though it did not for a moment occur to him that this was its

real purpose. His plan was to go to his father's tribe, the Elcuanams, in the mountains far away. There he should be safe from the Padre, and should also have the prestige of his father's reputation. If there were another medicine-man in the tribe Pio could easily outrank him and capture the business. So he made a long détour, and came back by evening to the valley, but a mile or two above the Mission. It would be easier to travel with Big Flower by keeping to the river-bed instead of going through the brush, which constantly threatened to tear it. He had a faint idea that it might close of its own accord at evening, and glanced up anxiously several times to see if it was doing so; but evidently it was not that kind of flower.

He heard the bells of the Mission ringing the Angelus, and shuddered as he thought of the wrathful Padre, no doubt now denouncing him publicly as a thief and renegade, and he hurried on till dark, when he found a sheltered spot and lay down. The night was chilly, and after a time the thought came to him that Big Flower would make a fine shelter: so he got up and arranged it so as to keep off the wind. Another idea: the clothes, why not put them on and be warm? It seemed a terrible thing to do, but he was running away from the Padre anyhow, so he might as well be comfortable as not. He got up again and spread out the clothes in the dim light: two woolen undershirts, two pairs of unmentionables to match, four large handkerchiefs of red silk, three pairs of blue woolen stockings, and a queer, three-cornered article, white, with strings, which he took to be some kind of pouch, but, by a happy thought, found to make an agreeable protection for the head. Also there was a pair of thick slippers of dark felt. He rolled the handkerchiefs up in a ball, and then drew on all the other garments except the slippers, not troubling to first remove his own scanty clothes consisting of a cotton jacket

and pantaloons. He now felt pretty comfortable, and lying down again was soon fast asleep.

When he awoke it was early morning. It was still cold, and he kept the clothes on. Indeed, it occurred to him that this was just the thing to do; it was much easier than carrying the bundle in one hand while Big Flower occupied the other. He would still have the slippers to carry, for he saw that they would soon be worn out if he wore them. With a few edible roots and berries he made a sort of breakfast, not without pensive recollection of the warm *atole* now being dished out at the Mission. When he was ready to go on he thought of the morning prayers at the Mission, and believing Big Flower to be something connected with the Church, the natural thing to do was to say his prayers before it, which he did, and then started on his way. After a few miles he knew he was near the shut-in valley (which we call El Cajon) and he remembered that there were Indians there who might know him. It is doubtful, really, whether any of his acquaintances would have stopped to recognize him had they caught sight of the figure he made, for it is safe to say that no such spectacle had ever been seen thereabouts as our friend Pio made, attired in the Father's underclothes, adorned with a nightcap, and carrying in one hand a vast yellow umbrella and in the other a pair of slippers. The handkerchiefs, much too fine to be wasted, he had tied together by the corners and made into a sash, such as he had seen the Mexican *caballeros* wear; and in his piebald of red, white, and blue, he made altogether a decidedly striking appearance.

As he was considering turning aside and making another *détour*, he had an object lesson of the effect he produced upon his countrymen. An Indian appeared at a little distance. He was gathering wood, and as he straightened from stooping his eyes fell upon Pio. With a yell he dropped his load and fled at

topmost speed, emitting such sounds as we try, but vainly, to utter in a nightmare. This, though a tribute to Pio's impressive aspect, and a gratifying omen of his success in the rôle of medicine-man, was also a warning of danger. He dived again into the brush and devoted strenuous hours to threading his way through thickets of chaparral until he emerged on the trail that led northeast into the heart of the mountains. Big Flower was happily intact, and the nightcap also except for a missing string, but the outer layer of the other garments had paid toll to many an affectionate scrub-oak and manzanita, and the stockings that had stood the brunt were practically footless. Pio surveyed the damage ruefully, and rebuked himself for not having preserved his new property by wearing his own clothes outside. He would make the change now, and as it was getting hot he decided to wear only one set of the undergarments (the damaged ones) under his own clothes, and to carry the others. When the change was made, he hurried on. He had made one or two more attempts to make Big Flower close, but had not succeeded, so he now marched along in a businesslike way under the great parasol, apparently an Indian gentleman more than usually careful of his complexion, taking a brisk walk.

One thing, however, he had to attend to, the question of food, for he was getting very hungry. He was now on a steep trail that led up to the valley now known as the Santa María, and there, he knew, was another *ranchería*, or village. Here, too, he might be known, but he must take the chance: he must have food, and would boldly go and ask for it. As he pushed his way through the trees he came unexpectedly upon three fat squaws who were sitting beside the creek, pounding acorns and grass seeds into meal. Just as he saw them, they saw him, umbrella, nightcap, slippers, and all. There was one shriek, or rather, a trio of shrieks that sounded like one, and the

women rushed like deer (albeit very fat deer) down the creek, and Pio heard them gabbling at top voice to what he knew must be the assembled and startled *ranchería*.

Our friend was a philosophical fellow, as we have seen, and as the natural thing to do was to gather up the little piles of meal, tie them up in the extra shirt, and make off with them, he did it. There was no need now for him to trouble the village, so he quietly withdrew by the way he had come, and, guided by the excited sounds that still reached his ears, made a roundabout way back to the trail, striking it beyond the village. At the next water, he mixed some of the meal into a gruel and ate it. It was not very palatable, and again he thought of the good food at the Mission, from which he was now forever debarred. But a look at Big Flower, gleaming like a great golden mushroom in the sun, consoled him, as he thought of the wealth and power he would enjoy among his tribe by means of this unparalleled marvel.

Night found him halfway between the Santa María Valley and the next higher one, to which the Spaniards who had first seen it had given the name of Ballena, from the long mountain, like a whale in outline, that shuts it in on the northwest. He found water, made a fire in the time-honored Indian way by rubbing two dry sticks together, and cooked the remaining meal. There was enough for a good supper, and some over, which he made into little cakes, drying them hard on the hot stones. He put on all the clothes again to sleep in, and made a wind-break as before with the umbrella. It was really more comfortable than the hard bed in his hut at the Mission, and he felt more than contented, even jubilant, over the change in his fortunes.

In the morning he said his prayers again before Big Flower, and started on his way early. He had pulled on the extra clothing at night over what he was then wearing, and as the

morning was cold, and the trail good, so that the clothes would not be harmed, he did not take them off, except the extra stockings, nor change so as to wear his own outside. Thus he again presented the tricolor aspect that had paralyzed the natives he had met. It now occurred to him to make a little experiment, a sort of trial canter, of his new profession, upon the Indians in the next valley. He was not far now from his own village of the Elcuanams, and might as well be getting into training. He would avoid surprising any stragglers at the next village, and would get into touch with the head men, explaining that he was the long-lost son of Kla-quitch, who had escaped after all these years from the Mission, and had come back, learned in all the knowledge of the white men and armed further with this most wonderful appliance of magic, to take his place as hereditary medicine-man of his tribe. He should see by that means what sort of impression he would be likely to make on his own people. Nominally they were Christians; but they were hardly ever visited by the priest, and he knew that the bulk of them were still much as in his father's day, and still placed reliance on the fetishes of the shamans.

Accordingly he made his approaches to the Ballena village with caution. It was about noon when he came near, and he could see, as he reconnoitered, that a group of men were talking together in the open space about which the houses were irregularly placed. That was excellent. He crept cautiously near, having some trouble to keep the umbrella out of sight till the psychological moment: and then, holding it high overhead with one hand and the slippers and extra garments in the other, in token of amity, he uttered the orthodox Indian greeting which answers to our "How d'ye do?" and advanced upon them.

They looked up all together: there was a yell that wakened

echoes that had slept for many a year; and in a twinkling the plaza (so to call it) was empty but for himself, and the braves were dodging about behind the houses in mortal terror of the hideous monster, worse than the white men, for he was an unheard-of, polychromatic kind of being, not only white, but red, blue, and yellow as well. It was no doubt the monster of whom the priest had warned them, who would appear one day, if they were not careful of their Christian duties (and they could not say they had been), and destroy them all and burn their village. The thing he had in his hand was doubtless the torch — see how it shone, just like fire! In vain poor Pio declaimed his speech: it fell on ears too demoralized to hear; and when one or two of them began to fit arrows to their bowstrings, the best thing to do was plainly to beat a prompt retreat. This he did, holding Big Flower ignominiously behind him to catch the arrows that he expected every moment to hear whizzing about him.

He ran for some distance till he was out of sight of the inhospitable village, and then sat down to rest and think. The adventure began to take on an unpleasant complexion. If every one he came near acted like this he could not be a medicine-man, for there would be no one on whom to practice; and the bow and arrow episode was really alarming. What if his own people refused to hear him? No one would recognize him there, for he was a boy when he had been taken to the Mission, and he had never been chosen to accompany the Padre on his rare visitations to the Elcuanams, as it had been thought wise not to allow him to return to the old surroundings. What had he better do? Of course he might discard Big Flower and all the other fine things, and return to his people an undistinguished runaway from the Mission (as not a few others had done, to the scandal of good Father Urbano); but he could not bring himself to that, not yet, at least. Well, he would

go on: probably the well-remembered name of Kla-quitch would make it all right.

His discouragement over the Ballena reception caused him to travel slowly, and it was nearly sunset when he drew near the Elcuanam village. It had been a cool day, so he had kept all the clothes on (except the extra stockings). The village was in an open place, near the upper end of a wide valley, and he could see it and be seen from it for a good distance. He could not think of a better plan of operations than the one he had tried at Ballena, badly as it had worked there: namely, to maneuver so as to make his first appearance when a number of the chief men were together, and then get the name of Kla-quitch to their ears as quickly as possible. That would arrest their attention, and further particulars could follow.

When he came in sight of the *ranchería* he stopped and sat down to bide his time. Only a few women and children and an old man or two were about: the braves were probably out hunting, or, perhaps, bravely sleeping until the squaws should announce that supper was served. So he waited, hidden behind a rise of ground. At last the men, to the number of ten or a dozen, had congregated for the evening lounge and pow-wow. Pio slipped into the shadow of one of the little houses whence he could issue in full view of the conclave. He settled the nightcap on his head, grasped the umbrella in one hand and the slippers and stockings in the other, and at a lull in the conversation advanced. He had decided to dispense with the "How d'ye do?" in order to play his best card at once: so as he stepped into the light of the fire he merely uttered in a loud tone the word "Kla-quitch," to catch their attention. He succeeded. A dozen startled heads turned toward him, and as he spoke his talisman again, and moved toward them, there came a hysterical howl from a dozen most unmusical throats, and his audience, followed by the women, children,

and dogs of the village, all shrieking in chorus, vanished into the night. It was a striking tribute to the memory and prowess of Kla-quitch (who, it was naturally supposed, had appeared and announced his return from the spirit world); but it was far from being what his son and intending successor had hoped.

This was the very dickens (or whatever the Elcuanam equivalent may be), for poor Pio! Whatever was he to do now? He prowled about among the houses trying to find some one to whom to explain, but the panic had swept even the old men and women away. He could hear the people calling to one another from their spots of refuge, and ever the burden of the shout was either "Kla-quitch!" or "Yellow!" — that is to say, the Elcuanam word for that suddenly unpopular color. He began to feel bitterly toward Big Flower, the cause, it seemed, of so much trouble, and even toward his departed parent, whose name, so long after his death, was such very bad medicine as to wreck his son's chances everywhere.

He squatted down by the fire, hoping that some of the men would return after a time, but none came. After sitting again by the fire for two hours or so, hoping vainly for company and pondering on his doubtful future, he felt sleepy, and stretched out with his feet to the blaze, not forgetting to set up his wind-break, really the only thing, he began to think, that Big Flower was good for.

He did not wake till morning, when he looked round anxiously. He could see the whole population gathered a quarter of a mile away, pointing toward him and skirmishing for the best positions for viewing his actions. Evidently he was taboo for good and all, and the vision he had had of himself as the feared and prosperous medicine-man of his tribe had been a very fancy portrait: feared he certainly was, but there it ended. It looked as if he had to choose between being a

medicine-man all by himself, or abandoning all his paraphernalia and, after a day or two's judicious absence, rejoining his tribe in the humble capacity of a mere runaway from the Mission.

Meanwhile he found some food — with difficulty, for the proprietors had removed their valuables during the night — and made a middling breakfast. He had not fully determined what to do, so he stayed where he was until his next step should become clearer. The morning passed slowly, with no developments. He kept an eye on the crowd of watchers, and once or twice he was puzzled to see that they pointed not only at him, but along the trail to the south, by which he had come.

Let us now go back a few hours, and take a look at Padre Urbano. We shall find him, not at the Mission, but only a few miles away — in fact, at Ballena. He had started on his visitations the next day after Pio's defalcation, and in anything but good temper. He had come, with his little party of half a dozen Indians, by the same general route that Pio had traveled, and had been only a few hours behind him. He did not stop at the Cajon and Santa María villages, as he meant to attend to his pastoral duties in those places on his return; but rumors reached him of some apparition having been seen by the natives. He knew these superstitious people only too well, however, and smiled at their credulity. At Ballena he stayed for the night, and was entertained with a more circumstantial account of a parti-colored demon who had been chased out of the village at arrow's point: but as he had not had time to check up the shortage in his clothes before leaving home, he did not recognize Pio under the description. He told the Indians, on general principles, that it was, as they supposed, a monster who had scented their slackness in religious affairs, and who would certainly call again if

they did not amend, and next time would not be so easily put off.

He left the Ballena *ranchería* early and started for Elcuanam. This was the farthest from headquarters of all his parishes. An outpost station had been established there nine years before, under the name of Santa Ysabel, but, with only yearly visits since then, it was in a moribund condition and had not progressed beyond the architectural stage of a *ramada*, or brush shelter. A message had been sent a few days before (without Pio's knowledge, as it happened), telling the Indians to get the *ramada* ready for use, and giving the time of the Padre's intended arrival.

The little procession, Padre, six Indians, and two burros carrying the necessities for the observance of mass, wound its way slowly up from the lower to the higher valley, and just before noon arrived at the top of the last rise before the Elcuanam, or Santa Ysabel, village should be reached. The Father was in the lead, our early acquaintance José close behind. They halted for a moment to rest before going on to the village. The Father noticed with gratification that the whole population was stationed on a hillock just beyond the village, evidently in expectation of his arrival; but he wondered why the foolish people waited there, instead of hastening to meet him. They had caught sight of him, for he saw them gesticulate, and it seemed to him that they pointed toward the houses, as if to draw his attention to something. So he looked, and his eyes caught the gleam of a large yellow object, set up as if it were a shrine, in the center of the village. Very odd, he thought; what had the silly Indians been up to now? They moved on toward the village, and as they approached, the Elcuanams cautiously approached also. When the Father arrived pretty near, he stopped, gazed hard, rubbed his eyes, gazed again, and then said to José, "José,

your eyes are better than mine: what is that in the village?" José's eyes were already starting from his head, as if to get a better focus on what he saw. "Padre," he said, almost in a whisper, "I think it is the yellow thing that Pio stole. The sergeant made it open when we went for the package, and it was like that." "Holy Saints!" cried the Father; "it looks like that to me, too, but it cannot be. How could my umbrella get to Santa Ysabel? And what has become of Pio? If it is the umbrella, he must have brought it here." "Padre," said José, "there he is. I think it is Pio, but he looks very funny, and he is kneeling in front of the yellow thing as if he was saying his prayers." "Saying his prayers!" said the priest with warmth; "indeed, he had better say his prayers if it is he!" And the party hurried forward.

As we know, there was no mistake about its being Pio. As for the prayers, — an unusual demonstration from the Elcuanams had caused him to glance again to the trail where they were pointing. There his horrified eyes had seen what seemed a miracle, but a most unfortunate miracle for him — Padre Urbano himself, a sight as unmistakable as unbelievable. Panic seized him, but on the instant he had an inspiration, too: he was caught, and something awful was bound to happen; but why not at least make an attempt to disarm the Father's indignation by being caught in the attitude of worship, which the Padre was everlastingly inculcating? It might not mitigate his wrath, but then it might. He propped the unlucky Big Flower up so that it would stand, hurriedly stuffed a pair of stockings into each slipper, dropped them beside the umbrella, and then fell on his knees and began to patter Ave Marias, faster, and much more fervently, than he had ever said them before the altar at the Mission. In his haste he forgot to take off the nightcap, though, indeed, he hardly viewed it in the light of a hat, or cap.

In this position the culprit was found by the Padre and his escort, and also by the Elcuanams, who, emboldened by the Father's fearless demeanor, had ventured back to the zone of danger. "Pio!" cried the Father, "get up and show yourself, if it is you. Sancta María! what is all this? Why, those are my clothes you are wearing, you graceless rascal! Take them off instantly, and tell me what you mean by this outrage. Bring him to me in the *ramada*, José, and be sure you bring the umbrella. Praise to the Saints! I have found it, and it seems to be undamaged, after all."

On the way to the *ramada* the Father could not help looking round once or twice at the prisoner, who followed with hangdog look, escorted by the scandalized Indians from the Mission and a mob of astounded Elcuanams. His indignation began to melt as he thought of the miraculous recovery of the umbrella, and, since he was a genial and lenient soul, each glance he took at the wretched Pio tickled his risibles more and more, until his shoulders shook with merriment. Arrived at the court of justice he managed to get up an aspect of terrific severity as the malefactor was led in by José. The umbrella and the other incriminating evidence were deposited beside him. The Elcuanams and the other Indians, crowding about the entrance, crooked their necks with anxiety to see what would happen. Pio had not yet disrobed, and stood dolefully awaiting the worst, from nightcap to stockings a clownlike and altogether incomprehensible figure. Again the Father's funny vein got the better of him. He knew that he was compromising himself forever, but for the life of him he could not help it — his lip trembled, he tried to control it but failed, he chuckled, giggled, cackled, and burst into a roar of laughter.

It was no use to think of punishment after that. When Father Urbano at last got the shreds of his dignity together,

the whole history was extorted from the trembling Pio, who, however, was shrewd enough to say nothing of his pagan dream of turning medicine-man. Gladly enough he shed the unlucky clothing. Vast quantities of water were brought from the spring and blessed by the Padre: the umbrella was sprinkled and sprinkled till no taint could remain; and then Pio, guarded by José, spent the afternoon in scrubbing the desecrated garments with bucket after bucket of holy water, while the assembled village, down to the smallest papoose, jeered at that most ignominious of spectacles — a man, washing clothes like a squaw!

To complete Pio's penance, it was his task to carry the umbrella over the Padre during all the rest of the round of visitations, which, it seemed to him, as he marched mile after mile with aching arms, would never end. But end it did, and Father Urbano's umbrella at last arrived at its original destination, San Diego Mission. Finally, after many and various further peregrinations, it ended its travels at the sister Mission of Santa Inés, where to-day the reader may find it reposing, a treasured item in Father Alexander Buckler's curious collection of relics. It is but fair to say, however, that I am doubtful whether Good Father Alexander will vouch for my story of its early adventures.

SAN GABRIEL ARCÁNGEL



THE BELLS OF SAN GABRIEL

RATHER a desolate little spot is the *campo santo* of San Gabriel; rather desolate, and very dusty. The ramshackle wooden crosses stagger wildly on the shapeless mounds; the dilapidated whitewashed railings, cracked and blistered by the sun, look much as though they might be bleached bones, tossed carelessly about; and the badly painted, misspelled inscriptions yield up their brief announcements only to a very patient reader. On the whole, depressing; but in a sleepy, careless way, like the little tumbledown houses of the Mexicans, across the road; like, also, the old Mission itself, yellowing and crumbling in the warm California sun into early decay.

Walking slowly about among the humble mounds, my mind lazily weaving from the names and dates of Sepúlvedas and Argüellos and Yorbas, with their romantic sound, a half-sad, half-delightful tapestry of fancy, I found myself at one inclosure of an appearance so different that I stopped to regard it particularly. It was the grave of a poor person, clearly, and not in that way noteworthy, for poverty was the air of the whole place. But it was carefully fenced with a high white railing; there were fresh flowers upon it; and it was evident that affectionate hands tended it. The short inscription, translated from its Spanish, recorded —

*Ysabel, wife of Ramon Enriquez,
born July 20, 1875: died October 23, 1893
Much beloved*

Eighteen years old, married, and dead! a sad strand of color this, to run into my tapestry, gay with silver lace, coquettish

fans, and high-heeled Spanish slippers. Eighteen years old, married, and dead; and *muy querida*, much beloved! My thoughts stayed behind, as I moved on, and the words, with their soft inflection, would recur dreamily to me, again and again — *muy querida*; alas! *muy querida*.

In the shade of a high remaining piece of the ancient mud-brick wall, three Mexicans, with cigarettes and sombreros, and gaudy as tulips in their striped *serapes*, were gambling, sleepily, at cards: from one of the little houses came the sleepy tinkling of a mandolin — *muy querida*. I wandered over to the edge of the little cemetery, and, sitting down, leaned against the hot wall, under the sleepy, flickering shade of the neglected olives and expiring walnuts of the Mission garden. Sleepily I watched the anxious labors of a hornet, busily building its nest of clay. A dragonfly hung for a moment before me, then alighted on a leaf and was suddenly smitten asleep. Everything drowsed, except the everlasting sun, pouring down ceaselessly his shriveling rays. Again, over and over, my mind dreamily repeated the words — only eighteen, married, and dead: *muy querida*.

The bells of the Mission are ringing, clear and strong, under the practiced hand of old Gregorio. Who can ring like he? And to-day, of all days, he is doing his best, for it is the *fiesta* of the blessed San Gabriel himself, and there are people come from all the towns of the valley, to say nothing of Los Angeles, to the *fiesta*. Not but what the saint has his day every year; but this particular day is a day of days, a *fiesta* of *fiestas*: for the Padre has arranged a procession in San Gabriel's honor, and what Mexican would not ride thirty miles to see a procession? So to the hitching-posts all up the long street are tied tired horses that have come that hot morning from San Fernando, and Calabasas, and farther still. And here and

there is a wagon that has brought a whole family, all to do honor to San Gabriel, and to see the sight of the day. And that is, preëminently, Ysabel Alvarado, the beauty of the valley, who is to walk at the head of the procession to the church.

The heart of the beautiful Ysabel is in commotion, somewhat liké the bells themselves, as she listens to them and to the clamor of the children, who began to gather an hour ago before the cottage, and are now shrilly calling, "Y-sa-bel." And she can hardly stand still while her mother is busily putting the last touches to the wonderful array in which she is to appear. Never before has any girl of the village had clothes so beautiful, entirely of white, yes, even to the shoes and their rosettes and laces, all of white, so dear to the Mexican heart. Moreover, there was the thought of Ramon; Ramon, who she thought loved her: to-day would surely prove it, when he saw her so dressed, like — yes, indeed — like a grand señorita. Ramon had been working in Los Angeles, and there there were so many — she sighed to think how many — girls for him to choose from. But to-day he was to be here: old Marta, her mother, had found out, and told her: and to-day would surely tell. There were others, of course: Ramon's friend, Felipe, for instance: he was clever, and sang well, and she knew he liked her. But it was Ramon's face that would come between her and the little square of looking-glass; and it was Ramon, too, who came into her mind — the saints forgive her! — even when she turned for a moment to her little crucifix, to say a prayer for good fortune, special good fortune, that day.

At last all was ready, even to the final brushing that her mother must give to the glossy hair which, parted by the dark, beautiful face, fell in a rippling shower almost to her knee. It is no wonder that Marta says, as she hovers, brush

in hand, about her, "Thou art like the great picture of the blessed Santa Bárbara, child, that I used to see in the Mission where I lived when I was as young as you"; and, to herself, "Ramon had best take care. Such flowers are not to be plucked every day as my Ysabelita." And it is no wonder that when Ysabel appears at the door, carrying carefully upright the waxen, fragrant spire of white lilies for San Gabriel which the Padre has sent to Los Angeles to procure, the excited expectation of the village and its visitors releases itself in a prolonged "Ah!" that nearly makes her laugh outright with happy pride. Least of all is it any wonder that Ramon Enriquez, gazing with all his soul, says, under his breath, "She is like an angel of heaven; yes, truly an angel is she, my Ysabel."

The bells of the Mission ring happily, happily, as the little procession passes into the church: *Muy querida, muy querida*.

Again the bells are swinging and ringing in the hot, sunny air. But it is not old Gregorio who rings now, one may be sure, so irregular are the strokes — loud, soft, quick, slow — as if the green old bells were actually out of breath with laughing. No, Gregorio has rung for thirty, yes, nearly forty years, and his ringing is as steady as the pendulum of the Padre's great clock. Ah, it is Juan, young scapegrace! that rings, and out of breath, truly, is he; so that for once he is ready to obey when admonished by the Padre to leave off. "What a noise thou art making, Juanito! I think San Gabriel will be stopping his ears. Run up the choir steps, boy, and call to me if thou seest them coming." Willingly enough the bare-legged urchin raced away, and, perched like an acrobat on the narrow rail, holding by a trailing branch of the pepper tree, shielded his merry black eyes as he gazed up the road. His slender stock of patience was nearly exhausted before the

sound of music reached his ears, and started his feet shuffling. "Padre, oh, Padre," he cried, "they are coming. I can hear the violin: it is Pedro that plays, I would bet anything. Ah, he can play! Yes, and Marta is coming first with the holy water."

Down the road comes, again, a procession. One half of the village is in it, and the other half views it with animated admiration from doorways and verandas. Marta, her old black dress for once cast aside, arrayed in yellow and red, leads the van, as she has at every wedding for twenty years. Following her come three musicians; Pedro, in the center, his gray, thin hair straggling over the collar of his well-brushed long black coat, with young Vicente and Arturo, the bridegroom's brothers, one on either side, accompanying Pedro's weird, thin-blooded strain with thrumming mandolins. Next come, by two and two, six little girls, pretty as angels, with little wild sunflowers in their glossy tresses, and carrying, with conscious pride, large bunches of red roses. And here are the bride and bridegroom, Ysabel Alvarado, the flower of San Gabriel, and Ramon Enriquez, to whose proud, dark face hers is often lifted with happy smiles at the words of admiration and friendly wishes that reach their ears.

Now, Juan, ring your loudest, and no one will complain: *Muy querida, muy querida* . . .

It is the big bell, only, of the Mission, that is ringing now, the one in the top embrasure of the arched *campanario*. It rings steady and clear, as Gregorio always makes it, but slowly, and the sound that trembles heavily out upon the heat-laden air settles down upon the village like a noonday shadow. Again there are people gathered for a simple procession, and horses are tied to the posts along the street. But this time it is not at old Marta's house that the people are

gathered, but at the new, white cottage that Ramon Enriquez built, a year ago, for his bride. Juan, merry and mischievous as a blue jay generally, is sober as he hovers on the outskirts of the little group of people. Again the six little girls are waiting, two and two, but they carry white flowers, lilies, roses, and jessamine. Presently Marta appears, a creeping, somber figure, black from head to foot.

The straggling group moves up the street, old Marta at the head, talking to herself, and shaking her head. As they near the Mission the great door opens, and the Padre comes out, followed by four young men, who carry — alas! my heart tells me what they carry — the brightness and lightness of the face and form of Ysabel Enriquez: and there lies upon her breast a tiny baby form. Alas! *muy querida!* Ramon walks behind, and looks neither to right nor left, as they take their place at the head of the little procession. And so they go, up the white, dusty road, to the *campo santo*.

Muy querida, muy querida, says the great bell: slower and slower, *muy querida, muy . . .* and so, ceases.

The sun was going down, its warm light dying away up the ancient wall. Far away sounded the faint thrumming of the mandolin in the cottage across the road: the three Mexicans were still silently gambling.

Yes, it is a desolate little spot, the *campo santo* of San Gabriel.¹

¹ The foregoing sketch was written some short time ago, before certain renovations were made about the cemetery which have changed the "atmosphere" of the place. I confess to an unreasonable wish that God's Acre might have been spared by the industrious hand of the whitewasher, when the zeal for "cleaning up" seized upon the village fathers of San Gabriel.

SAN FERNANDO



THE BURIED TREASURE OF SIMÍ

THE idea of finding buried treasure has always exercised what seems to me an unreasonable charm over people's minds: unreasonable, not, of course, that there would not be charm in finding it, but because of the disparity between the amount of attention that has been spent on the quest and the real prospect, usually, of success. Treasure islands, treasure ships, treasure graves, and many other such possibilities have been many times exploited, both in fact and in story; so it is not surprising that the California Missions should also have had their vogue as a supposed Tom Tiddler's ground. And as a matter of fact, a good many of the buildings show plain traces of the ravages of pick and shovel, sometimes wielded boldly by parties of declared prospectors, but more often in secret by knights of the dark lantern.

Why it should be supposed that riches were buried in these places is not clear; but somehow the idea seems to arise automatically in connection with old or ruined buildings. A recent writer remarks that "The foolish notion that the Fathers had unlimited wealth, nay, gold or silver mines, which they concealed, was common among the Mexicans of that day, and it exists among their descendants to the present time." So far as can be known, the seekers have never found anything of value. It seems, indeed, unlikely that the Fathers at any of the Missions ever could have amassed any sum of money that would be much worth secreting. Saving anything out of their meager stipend of four hundred dollars per year would have been out of the question, even if the sum had been paid in money, in full, and regularly, none of which desirable condi-

tions seems to have been met; while as to hoarding from the proceeds of the industries carried on at the Missions, although the returns must have been large, the expense of caring for a family of a thousand or so Indians must have been proportionately heavy. And in addition there are to be reckoned the exactions of the provincial Government, which seems to have looked upon the Missions generally as a sort of providential and inexhaustible milch cow. So that the latest defender of the Padres, the learned Father Zephyrin Engelhardt, is probably justified in holding that their riches were all of unworldly metal, and consisted only in "their conscientiousness, industry, economy, and abstemiousness." Such intangible valuables, it may be remarked, if they could be recovered by delving, would certainly not have proved, in the estimation of the delvers, a satisfactory reward.

The Mission of San Fernando, some twenty miles northwest of Los Angeles, has more than once been the scene of these unhopeful quests. The visitor, who might be curious concerning sundry excavations noticed in the foundations of the massive adobe walls, would be told by the old Mexican who acted as custodian of the ruin — it is hardly more than that — that they were made by "*malos hombres, ladrones, que buscaban dinero*"; and, with a shrug, "*Tontos! no cogieron no mas que polvo, mucho polvo, mucho trabajo*" (bad men, thieves, who were looking for money. Fools! they got nothing but dust, plenty of dust and plenty of work). And with a chuckle old Tomás would lead the way up the next rickety stairway.

Yet, one cannot tell. There may have been instances of treasure being buried about the Missions, on some emergency arising, since, in the times we are thinking of, the only means of safe-keeping sums of money that were too large to be carried on the person was the secreting of them in the walls of

buildings or in the ground. Be that as it may, perhaps the reader will have a better explanation of the facts of the following narrative than the one with which I conclude it.

On the afternoon of a warm day of June, some twenty summers since, I was making my way from Los Angeles to the coast by way of the San Fernando Valley and the road that runs through the Simí Hills. It was yet the dawn of the automobile era, and direction signs did not then, as now, give the traveler on California roads the certainty of his route that he now enjoys; and I found myself, at late afternoon, in considerable doubt whether I had not mistaken my way, with the probability, if that were the case, of having to camp for the night in the open. My horse would not suffer, for there was forage in abundance, and water was not hard to find thus early in the summer; but it was annoying for myself, for I had but a scrap of food and no blankets. The road, well traveled at first, that I had been following for two hours past, had for some distance been showing signs of degenerating into a trail (in that inexplicable way that roads sometimes have), and now it seemed about to "peter out" finally on a hillside of yellowing grass. Yet I knew I had been making in the right direction, even if off my road, so I was loath to turn back. The road, or trail, probably led somewhere, and I decided to keep on as long as any track could be seen leading westerly.

Two miles or so farther brought me to the end of all tokens of travel. The track had dwindled to less and less, and now had dropped to the bouldery bed of a cañon stream, from which no woodcraft of mine, nor of my good trail-wise horse, could perceive that it made an exit. If the trail continued, it must follow the bed of the stream. At any rate, here was water, the first requisite for a camp; I decided to go on for a while, but to stick to the creek, for safety. Dismounting, I

led Pancho forward by the bridle among the slippery boulders. The sun was well out of sight, and the chirring of crickets among the herbage announced that soon the evening shades would prevail. Evidently, camping was to be my portion, so I kept my eyes open for a good spot for the purpose. The cañon appeared to widen out a little way ahead: there I should probably find good grazing for the horse (though not, I ruefully reflected, for myself). Arriving at the opening, I found, as I expected, grassy slopes rising from the creek, and resolved to make here my bivouac.

Taking off saddle and bridle I turned Pancho loose to graze, while I gathered wood for a fire. The dusk was soon enlivened by a crackling blaze, beside which I sat to eat a sandwich and a scrap of chocolate, reserving an equivalent banquet for the morning. Pancho munched away cheerfully, the stream tinkled and purred; the first star telegraphed its friendly signal down through the ether: to be lost in the Simí was not half bad.

My supper (since it must be so called) over, and Pancho picketed for the night, I walked a short way up the cañon in the gloaming. Some two hundred yards from camp, at a point where the stream made a turn, I stopped in sudden surprise at the sight of a light shining among a clump of small live-oaks near by to my right. "Well," I said to myself, "so I am on a trail, after all. Can there be a house here, too?" A few steps, and my question was answered, for I saw that the light shone through the open window of a little house of adobe. What should I do? My appearance at this lonely spot at night would cause so much surprise that I hesitated. But I was quite conscious that I had made an unduly light supper, and, moreover, that I was in the way of making no better a breakfast. Probably I could buy here a little food, and at any rate, I could get information as to my road: so I approached

the house. There was an attempt at a garden, I saw, and growing against the window was a bush of the red-flowered sage which I have noted as being a general favorite with Mexicans. As I came up to the door I heard voices, and caught a glimpse through the window of a woman sitting at a rough table, eating. At the same moment a dog within the room started up and barked loudly. It seemed to be my cue to speak as well as knock, so, acting on a vague assumption that the people were Mexicans, I called, "*Buenas noches!*"

The talking ceased abruptly, and with it the music of knife and fork on crockery. I knocked and called again, "*Buenas noches!*" A chair moved, and a man's voice said, "*Abajo, perro!*" whereupon the bark was exchanged for an equally uncomfortable growling. Then the door was thrown open, and a man, standing in the doorway, asked in Spanish, "Who is there?" In a few words I explained my presence, adding that I was short of food and should be glad to purchase a little. "Enter, señor," he invited, and, as I did so, "Carlota," he said to one of two well-grown girls who sat by the woman, "Carlota, give your seat to the *caballero*." The woman had risen already, and in a matter-of-fact way was putting a plate and cup, evidently for me. My first impulse was to explain that I had had my supper; but I have always found frank acceptance to be the best reply to the frank hospitality of these courteous people, and with an expression of thanks I took the offered place and was ready to share their meal.

I now had an opportunity to notice my entertainers. The man was a strongly built, good-looking, middle-aged Mexican; the wife (as I took her to be) placid-looking, kindly-featured, and of the national middle-aged stoutness. The two children were slender, attractive girls, verging on the early womanhood of their race. I think they were twins. This, I supposed, comprised the household, until, my glance

following the wife as she went to the stove, I saw another person. A man, apparently deformed, sat by the fire, bent forward, his hands resting on a stick. But doubled over as he was, his eyes, black and piercing, followed every movement made by any of us. My host, by whom I sat, said in a low voice, "He is my brother, señor: he is very ill." I was on the point of making some remark of condolence when he added, "He cannot speak, señor: he is dumb." Feeling that it would be best not to refer to the matter, and to turn the conversation, I inquired as to the road I had missed, and whether I could get through to the coast without returning. This I learned I could do, my host promising to put me in the way in the morning.

Just as supper, which proved to be a cheerful meal, was over, the invalid in the corner, rapping with his cane on the floor, gave notice that he needed attention. Carlota went quickly to him and helped him to rise, and then led him, slowly and with no little trouble, into an adjoining room. As he shuffled past where I sat, my eye caught the glitter of some object of metal that swung by a cord from his neck, in the fashion of a medal. This I later decided it to be, when I noticed what seemed to be an exactly similar object on a little shelf or bracket, fixed to the wall, on which stood a small figure of the Virgin. The woman now rising to clear the table, I rose also, and, thanking my kind entertainers for their hospitality, asked what I owed them, saying also that I should be glad to buy a little food of them before leaving in the morning. They would accept no money for the meal, however, and I forbore to press them. As I took my hat to go, my host asked, "Will you not sit a while by the fire? It is yet early, and it is cold outside." I gladly assented, and, offering him my pouch, a friendly smoke began.

The seats at the table were heavy benches, not easily

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moved, but in the corner by the stove, where the sick man had sat, I saw a dark, box-like object which would serve for a chair. I was about to seat myself on this when my host (whose name, I learned, was Leandro Rojas) hastily interfered. "Not on that, señor," he said: "it would be bad fortune, very bad fortune," at the same time pulling one of the benches forward. On this we both sat, and chatted, somewhat haltingly on my part, for my Spanish was no more fluent than his English. I was curious about that bad-omened seat in the corner, especially as I felt pretty sure it was on that that the invalid had been sitting: but, not wishing to violate my friend's superstitions, I refrained from alluding to the matter. My gaze, however, often reverted to the puzzling object, which in the dim light appeared to be a small but solid chest of some dark wood, heavily clamped with iron bands, and, I thought, having something carved on the lid. I suppose Señor Rojas noticed me looking at the chest with interest, and when, in the course of conversation, I asked whether his brother had long been ill, he replied, "Yes, señor, many years; but my wife does not like it talked of: it is ill fortune to talk of bad luck, she says. And the box is bad fortune, that is certain. I wish it were not here. But I will tell you about it when we go out of the house."

I spent with them a pleasant hour, finding topics of mutual interest — among them the perennial one of rattlesnakes, of which I had found the region unduly prolific, and the need of schooling for the children, who, though attractive and well-mannered, had never made the acquaintance of even slate and pencil. On bidding them good-night, I asked whether I might breakfast with them (on the strict understanding of payment for the meal), and was glad when they willingly agreed.

When I left the house, Leandro said he would walk with me to my camp, and I took the opportunity of asking about the

chest. "I will tell you, señor," he said, "though it is bad fortune, and I wish I had never seen it. See what it has done to my brother!" "Was it the box that hurt your brother?" I asked. "How? did it fall on him?" "Oh, no, señor, nothing like that," he replied. "It was his horse that hurt him; but all the same it was the box that did it. My wife says so, and I say so, too. Pedro, I do not know what he thinks, but then, he is as you see. This is how it happened, señor.

"It was many years ago, yes, nearly twenty years. We were both young then, and we worked on the Escorpión, for Don Guillermo. My father used to work for him too: he was a foreman on the ranch: and when Pedro and I were old enough to ride after the cattle he made us *vaqueros*. Pedro was strong in those days, yes, stronger than I am now, and quite tall. There was no one who could ride like Pedro on the Escorpión. To see him now! *ay de mi!* Well, señor, one day some steers were missing, twelve or fifteen or more, and my father sent us, Pedro and me, to find them and bring them in. We hunted for them one day, two days, and could not find them. The range was getting poor on the Escorpión, but it was still good in the hills, and my father said the cattle must have gone up to the Simí. So the next morning we started toward the Simí, and it was not long before we found their tracks, coming toward the hills. We followed them all that day, and nearly at night we found them. It was in a little valley that is quite near here: you will go through it to-morrow, señor.

"We had brought food with us, for we knew we might be more than one day out, and when we had found the cattle we looked for a place to camp. We headed the steers down the creek, and came out into this cañon. And here we saw the house, the same house, señor: so you see it is quite old, but it was old then, too. We were surprised, for we did not know

there was a house there at all, and we had been born at San Fernando, and we thought we knew everybody that lived this way as far as Ventura. It was nearly dark, and there was no light in the house nor anybody about, though the house did not look quite as if no one lived there. We should have liked to use it to sleep in, but we thought some one must live there, and might come in, so we made a camp on the creek. Just about here, where your camp is, is where we slept.

"In the morning, after we had eaten, Pedro said he was going to look inside the house. I was saddling the horses and did not go with him. In a few minutes I heard him call, so I went to the house. Pedro was standing at the door, and he looked white and frightened. 'There are dead people here,' he said: 'they are all dead.' He went in and I went in after him. In the back room there was a bad sight, a very bad sight, señor: a lot of bones lying all about the room, and there were three skulls among them. In the middle of the room was that box you saw, with the lid open. There was a big bone, like a leg bone, lying right across it, I remember. *Zape!* a bad sight that was.

"It must have been a long time since they had died, months, perhaps years, two or three, from the look of the place and the bones. The coyotes had been in, and nothing but the bones and some bits of clothing was left. They had all been men, at least I think so, because there were no women's clothes. In the box there were pieces of money, twenty or thirty, or perhaps more. I did not like to touch it, with the dead men all about there: but Pedro, he was always one who cared for nothing. He said it was lucky to find them: the money was n't dead, he said, and he laughed at me. He picked up one of the coins: it was a silver *peso* of Spain, very old. Was it not strange, señor? All the money was the same, all *pesos* and all old. I have never seen any more like them.

“Well, Pedro said we ought to take the money. The dead men could not spend it, he said, so it was foolish to leave it. But I would not touch it, not one piece. I wanted to burn the bones, and at last Pedro helped me. We picked them all up, the skulls and all. *Diantre!* it was bad work! I wanted to put them in the box, and burn all together, and bury the money. But Pedro would not: he wanted the money, and he said he would have the box too. So instead of burning them, we buried them, that is, the bones. We found an old spade, and dug a place behind the house, among the sycamores on the hill — you will see to-morrow — and buried them.

“Then we had to go to take the cattle back to the ranch. Pedro would take the money: he put it in his clothes. It was quite heavy, and you could hear it, so he put some in his shoes and in other places. I asked him what he would do with the box, because he would not burn it. He said he wanted it because it had been good luck to find it: he would get it some day and keep it. Then we went away with the cattle. Pedro said we should not tell anybody about what we had found, nor about the dead people; and there was no one to tell, I mean the officers, unless we went to Los Angeles. So I did not say anything, and Pedro did not, because he had taken the money.

“It was not long before he had used it up. I don’t know where he spent it, for there was no money like it, and people would ask where he got it: but somehow he spent it, all but two *pesos*. Then one day he asked me to come with him to the place again: he wanted to see if the box was there, and if anybody lived in the house. I did not want to see the box, but I wanted to know if any one lived there, so I came with him. It was about a year after we had found the dead men and the money. It was a Sunday, and we got to the place about noon, for we started early. Everything was like we had

left it, and it did not look as if any one had been to the house. The box was there, and it was open; and then I noticed that there was some writing on a piece of paper inside the lid. It must have been there when we saw the box before, but we had not noticed it. It was very old and yellow, and torn, too, and we could not read it. They did not seem like Spanish words. We stayed an hour, maybe, and then I said we should go, so as to get back before night. Then Pedro said to me, why should n't we come and live here in the house. We each had a few head of cattle of our own by that time, nearly twenty all together, and the range here was very good. He was tired of working on the Escorpión, he said. The place did n't belong to anybody, as far as we could tell, and we could make a good home here and do well with our cattle.

"I forgot to say that I had got married a little time before, and I said my wife would not come so far away from her people. They lived at Calabasas. I did n't like the idea of living in that house, though I liked the land and wanted to have a place of my own, now that I was married. So we were talking about it when we got on our horses to ride back. We rode past the sycamore trees, where we had buried the bones of the dead men. Just when we passed the place, my brother's horse jumped at something, and threw him off. He fell against a sharp rock that hurt him in the back. He was quite still, and I thought he was dead. For a long time he did not move, but I could see he was breathing. I got water and threw it on him many times, and at last he opened his eyes. But he could not move, señor, nor speak either: the rock had hurt his backbone, and his legs were like dead. He was a *paralítico*, and he has never been able to move, any more than you saw him move, nor talk either.

"I did not know what to do. It was many miles to the ranch, and there was no one that lived anywhere nearer. My

brother was in much pain, so I could not put him on his horse: I was afraid of hurting him more. He could not talk, but he pointed at the house, for me to take him there. There was nothing else to do, and at last I got him there. Then I said I must go and get help to take him away, but he shook his head and would not let me go. I think he thought he might as well die there as anywhere, and he was half dead anyway. But I had to go to get food, and I thought I could bring a doctor also. I left him some water, and got on my horse and rode — *cielo*, how I rode! — for I thought he might be dead when I got back. It was dark most of the way, and it was midnight when I got to the ranch. I got help, and sent for a doctor to come from Los Angeles. My wife — she is a good woman, my wife, Elena, señor — she said she would come with me to nurse Pedro if he could not be brought away. We were back at the house the next day early, two cousins of mine and my wife and myself. Pedro was lying where I had left him, but he was out of his head. Whenever he saw the box he would try to get up and go to it, so I put it where he could not see it. I had never told my wife about the box and the money: I thought it would only do harm to talk about it.

“The doctor came the next day. He said Pedro would never be able to walk; he might be able to speak after a while; but he never has. The doctor told us he ought not to be moved for a long while. And so we stayed, señor, and we have never gone away. Don Guillermo was very good: I think God makes people good to one when one is in trouble, is it not so, señor? He gave me ten more cattle; two of them were good milch cows. That made thirty head we had all together. And he sent us a lot of flour, and coffee, and *frijoles*; and then he found who owned the land the house was on: it was an American, who lived in San Francisco and never came here at all; and Don Guillermo told him about my

brother getting hurt, and he promised that we could have the house and the grazing for nothing for three years, and then pay a little when we could. After about ten years I bought the place, about fifty acres, and now it is my own.

"So it was bad fortune the box brought us, as I said, señor, but good fortune, too. Did you see what my brother has round his neck, señor? It is one of the *pesos*. He had two of them left when he was hurt: he had always said he would keep those two for more luck, as he called it. One day, after he was hurt, I saw him making a hole in one of them, and he hung it round his neck. He gave me the other. I did not want to take it, so I put it on the shelf for Our Lady. You can see it in the morning, and you can see the box, too. My wife would like to burn it, and so would I, but Pedro will not let us, and he always sits on it. There is carving on it, an 'F' and a 'Y,' I think, and there is the writing inside, though much of it is gone now. Perhaps you can tell what the writing says: I should like to know, if there is enough left to tell by.

"Well, it is late, and Elena will be going to bed. I am sorry that we have no room for you to sleep in, señor, but the house is small, and we are so many women and sick. *Buenas noches, señor.*"

I was much interested in the strange story I had heard, and lay for some time awake, trying to fit a working theory to the black chest and the Spanish dollars, but with no success. It was a puzzle that was worth a good deal of trouble to unlock if it could be done, and I was eager for daylight, to get a good view of the box. Probably the invalid would not be up so early as the rest of the family, who had breakfast, I had learned, at six o'clock. I was prompt upon the hour, and while waiting a few minutes before the meal was ready, I examined the silver piece and the chest. The coin was a large one, Spanish, as my host had said, and bore the inscrip-

tion of Carlos III, with the date 1787, and the arms of Castile and León. The box I examined with special attention. It was exceedingly heavy for its size, which was about thirty inches long by fourteen wide and ten deep, and was made of the dark, hard wood of some tropical tree that had withstood decay wonderfully. On the upper side of the lid were cut the letters "F Y" in plain, deep carving, encircled with an elaborate scroll, this somewhat defaced and broken in outline. Three heavy strips of iron were fastened round the shorter circumference, one near each end of the box and one at the middle. At the ends were strong wrought-iron handles, and there was a curious lock, also of wrought-iron. I opened the lid, and there, as Leandro had said, were the remains of a sheet of parchment, vellum, or heavy hand-made paper, which had been glued to the wood, but the greater part of which was torn or worn away. It was evident that the writing was too much defaced to allow of more than a mere guess at its purport, but by the not very good light I copied what I could decipher of the inscription. This is what I made out:—

hac ar	osit	unt num	tria mi	et qu	enti qui
pert	anc Mi	Sanc	in cujus fini		
utelam ob lat		hoc lito	atis com		
arca absco	a est.				

rra.

Oc 1824.

I had hardly finished my transcription when my hostess entered saying that breakfast was ready in the kitchen: so no attempt at working out the puzzle could be made at the time. Pedro's food was taken to him by Carlota, and he did not appear before I left. During the pleasant meal, I looked with added respect at the woman whose goodness of heart had led her willingly to undertake, and to carry day by day for many years, the burden of a hopeless, and I fear an ungrateful, in-

valid (though, indeed, from my experience of the kindness, and especially the strength of the family bond among the Mexican people, I might well have been prepared for such magnanimity).

Soon after breakfast I bade them farewell, Leandro accompanying me a short distance to show me my road. When we came to part, no further word had been said regarding Pedro or the mysterious chest. I said nothing, for I had no theory to offer. When we shook hands, after thanking him heartily I remarked that I hoped we might meet again, adding, as an afterthought, "and in a luckier house." "Yes, señor," he said, "but it is not the house that is unlucky: Our Lady attends to that. It was the money, and, you see," — with a smile — "I gave her the half of what was left. Do you know, señor, sometimes I think the money was stolen from the Church. That would account for all, is it not so? They say the churches had much money once. *Quien sabe? Adios señor.*"

As I turned Pancho into the trail that would bring me to the Ventura road, my mind was busy at a clue that Leandro's parting words had started. "F Y," the letters carved on the chest — somehow they seemed to link up with something in my memory. Who was that Padre of whom Robinson, in his "Life in California," spoke with a good deal of disparagement? The surname initial was surely a "Y," and it seemed to me that San Fernando was the Mission where the depreciated Father dwelt. Yorba, Ybarronda, Ybañez, Ybarra — yes, that was it: Ybarra, sure enough, and the first name was Francisco, it seemed to me; and I felt sure now that it was at San Fernando that Robinson encountered him. All circumstantial evidence, no doubt, but highly interesting. To try another link — did the scraps of writing give any support to my idea? I took out my notebook: unmistakably

there were the letters "rra" remaining where naturally the signature would be written. All the rest of the name was gone except a fragment of rubric, but that embellishment again made it plain that the letters were part of a name.

With that I had to be satisfied, both then and now. Matters of more personal importance soon pushed the problem into the back of my mind. Once, indeed, chancing on a copy of the torn inscription, I spent an idle hour in trying to fashion the oddments into a possible connected whole. In case the reader should be interested in such exercises, I will give my tentative solution.

I take the writing, as far as the signature, to have been in Latin, and this is my guesswork rendering: the reader may perhaps improve upon it: —

In hac arca depositi sunt nummi tria millia et quingenti qui pertinent ad hanc Missionem de Sancto Fernando, in cujus finibus ad cautelam ob latrocinia hoc litore a piratis commissa haec arca abscondita est.

Francisco Ybarra.

Oct. 1824.

My chain of guesses, then, is that the old chest that I saw in that house in the Simí Hills may have once been the personal property of Fray Francisco Ybarra, sometime priest in charge of the Mission of San Fernando. That he, on the approach of some marauders, buried the chest, with the stated sum of money in silver *pesos* of Carlos III, in some hiding-place about the Mission precincts. That for some unguessable reason the chest was never taken up by the priest or his successors; but that long years afterwards, probably not less than fifty, some party of treasure-seekers (of whom there are evidences of there having been many at that Mission) came upon the buried chest. That it was transported by them to the lonely house in the mountains, some twenty miles dis-

tant. That there, a quarrel occurred over the booty, and that the survivor or survivors of the fatal affray, if any there were, did not, for some reason, carry off in their flight all the treasure. The rest of my theory is embodied in the foregoing narrative.

But after all, as to the whole matter, probably there is little to be said that is more to the point than the all-embracing phrase of Leandro, and of Spain and Mexico in general — *Quien sabe?* — Who knows?

SANTA BÁRBARA



LOVE IN THE PADRES' GARDEN

IT was five years since I had seen my old chum, Dick Trevgern, back in Boston, while Mrs. Trevgern I had never seen at all. So when, last winter, I found myself at Santa Bárbara, where they lived, one of the first things I did was to trace them in the telephone book and call up Dick. The result was an urgent invitation to dinner that evening. I was quite keen to meet my friend's wife, and all the more so, since Dick, who is one of the finest fellows in the world, is, or used to be, also one of the oldest-fashioned, and had seemed to be destined for bachelor joys; so I wondered what could be the special charms that had subjugated him.

I found them as cozy as a married couple of two years' standing has a right to be, in a rose-embowered cottage on one of the hill streets near the Mission. Mrs. Trevgern I found to be a very pretty, vivacious, and in every way attractive girl, — she was only twenty, — and as they were evidently very fond of each other I rejoiced at Dick's good sense and good fortune. It was a very jolly little dinner, and altogether as pleasant an evening as I have ever passed. At some indirect reference to the topic (it is hard to find a name for it that is agreeable to every one, but I will use a well-worn phrase) the emancipated woman, I had an opportunity of seeing that the lady clearly was of the affirmative party, whereas I knew, from recollection of old times, and anyway because Dick was Dick, that his view on the question was a decided No. This raised an interesting little speculation in my mind, and when, about eleven o'clock, Mrs. Trevgern declared that she was going to leave us two together for a good

confabulation over old days, and retired for the night, I made some half-joking reference to the matter, and asked Dick how it happened that he, of all men, had chosen a wife out of the emancipation camp.

"Oh, well," he replied, "she is a dear good girl" — I hastened to say that I was sure of it — "and we have lots of fun out of our different ideas on little things like that. The odd thing is, though, that it was Kitty's fad for woman's rights and that sort of thing that is responsible for her being Mrs. Trevgern — I mean, that was what you might call the exciting cause. Pull your chair up to the fire and I'll tell you all about it. It was really quite a joke.

"No doubt it will be news to you that I used to know Kitty years ago, before either you or I came to California. All the time that you fellows were ragging me about being an old bachelor, I knew my own mind and meant to marry Kitty some day. I don't think you knew her people, the Draytons. They lived down at Quincy, close to us, and our families were old friends. At the time that I got this appointment out here she was only sixteen, but before I came away from Boston I told her I loved her, and that when I had got on my feet I was going to ask her to marry me. I did n't want her to promise then, for it did n't seem square to ask her; but I had a pretty good idea that she liked me, and I figured that in two or three years I could be so placed that I might fairly ask her, and, as young as she was, she would hardly have fallen in love with any one else. After I came to California I wrote to her now and then, not often, and no spooning, you know, but just to keep myself in her mind; and she answered with good, sensible, newsy letters.

"She was always a particularly bright girl, with a good idea of what was going on in the world and a mind of her own about it. In one of her letters she said she had been going to

a set of lectures by some confounded Englishwoman, on *The Woman of To-morrow*, or the Day after To-morrow, or something, and asked me what I thought about what she called *Woman's Awakening*. I dare say you remember how we used to argue all that stuff in our old Debating Club — did n't we just! — and how I always got sat upon for being a back number and not lining up with the hatchet brigade? Well, I had n't changed my mind — have n't yet, for that matter — but I did n't suppose she cared two hairpins about it, and I replied with some old joke or other, and let it go. From other letters, though, I soon saw that Kitty had got really keen on the suffrage business, and that she knew I was a heretic: but we both had sense enough not to let the subject get on the argumentative line.

“It ran on that way until two years ago, and then her people came to spend the winter in California. In the early spring they came up to Santa Bárbara, and I saw Kitty again. I had n't weakened at all in my loving her, and she was prettier than ever — almost as pretty as she is now, bless her. — Yes, I knew you'd think so, old man. — By that time I was doing quite well, and prospects were good enough so that I felt I could ask her to marry me. One day, on a drive round by Montecito, I asked her. She would n't promise: said she liked me as much as ever, and did n't care about any one else, but did n't think she ought to marry me, and so on. I could n't get her to say why for a long time, but at last it came out. Some one, that idiotic Englishwoman, I suppose, had put it into the dear girl's head that it was her duty not to ally herself with ‘a reactionary’ (I think that was the word) and in this case that meant poor harmless me. I argued till I must have been blue in the face, but I could n't get her to give in: she says now that she thought she would make *me* give in. And so it had to stay, but my consolation was that I knew she

really cared for me. It was just head against heart, and though I knew, as I said, that Kitty's head was as good as anybody's, I thought her heart was better yet. I told her, though, that I should n't let it rest like that for long.

"A day or two later I had an engagement to go up with them to look at the Mission. One of the Fathers showed us through, a dozen or more people altogether, regular tourist style, and we had seen about everything there was, when some one asked if we could n't go into the sacred garden. You know what I mean? There's a private garden that most people don't get to see, and which, as the story goes, no woman is allowed to enter. The priest said he was sorry, but it was only by special permission that any visitor saw that garden and that permission was never given for ladies to see it. Kitty pricked up her ears at that.

"'Do you mean to say,' she said to me, as we walked on, 'that there is a part of the Mission where men may go and women must n't?' 'I don't mean to say so,' I told her, but the Padre here does, and I'm afraid that settles it.' 'Indeed, it does n't,' she said. 'What does he mean? Is there something horrid there that is not nice for women to see?' 'No,' I replied; 'it's nice enough, just a garden. They call it sacred, but I don't know why.' 'Oh, I see,' remarked Kitty, 'sacred from women, no doubt. That's just like these monks: they think this is the Middle Ages still. I suppose you think so too. You may go anywhere, because you are a man, but a woman is to be shut out of this and that — they're sacred!' I could see she was pretty much excited, and I tried to calm her down. 'Now, Kitty,' I said, 'you know very well that as far as I'm concerned there's nothing on earth that I want so much as for you and me to be together always and everywhere. Let them keep their old garden: anyway, if it's too sacred for you it would certainly kill me on the spot.' 'It's all very well

to make fun,' she returned, 'but it's the principle that has to be fought. It's absurd, it's — it's mediæval! And you're mediæval too,' she wound up. 'Well,' I said, 'I always knew I was a bit old-fashioned, but I was never called a regular antique before.' That made her laugh, and we forgot all about the old garden till we got back to the house.

"At least, I thought she had forgotten, but when I said good-bye she came with me to the door, and said, 'Dick, I'm going to see that garden at the Mission. It is n't that I care about the garden, but I do care about the principle. I'm going to get in somehow, and I want to know, will you help me?' 'My dear Kitty,' I answered, 'I'm your man: at least you know I want to be. The only thing is, how do you mean to do it?' 'That's for you to arrange,' she said. 'You men think you can do things better than women, so here's a chance to show what you can do.' 'Well,' I remarked, 'it looks like a burglar's job, and I've not done much in that line: but you know what I said, that I want to go everywhere you go, and if that means jail, I'm game.' She looked a bit serious when I talked about jail, for she thought I was in earnest: but she did n't back down, and I said I would see what plan I could think up.

"I easily found out whereabouts the garden was, and the only way I could see to get Kitty in there was by climbing over the wall some evening after dark. It was an adobe wall, and not very high. I could easily get over it myself, but for Kitty we ought to have a ladder. There was a bright little Mexican chap I knew, whom I had met one day up by the Mission. He lived near there, and one day I had seen him haunting about and got him to pose in a picture. After that we'd had chats now and then. It occurred to me that Julio could find a short ladder and bring it to the place: and I had an idea — old-fashioned, you see, as usual — that he would

make a kind of chaperon, too, to save a little bit of the respectabilities. I told Kitty my plan, and she thought it was all right, jumped at it, in fact; so we set the time for two days after the next full moon. We figured that as it was sundown soon after five o'clock, we could do our wall-climbing when it got dark, say about half past six, before the moon came up. It would rise about seven, and we should have plenty of light to investigate the garden. Kitty did pretty much as she liked at home, as regards being in or out, so all she would need to tell her people was that she was going to be with me that evening.

"Well, I arranged it with Julio. He was a mischievous little rascal, and it looked like a good joke to him; and a couple of dollars was good pay for a joke. When the evening came, I called for Kitty about six o'clock. I had told her to dress in some kind of color that would not show too much by moonlight, so she had on a big gray cloak of her mother's that covered her all up. It had a hood, too, so she did n't need a hat. For fun I had drawn a large placard, with 'Votes for Women' on it in big letters. I meant to tack it to a tree or something if I got a chance, but Kitty did n't know anything about this.

"When we got to the place, Julio was there with his ladder. It is very quiet round there at night, and there was not much danger of any one coming past. I got up first on the wall to make sure the coast was clear. There were lights shining from two or three windows, but no one was moving, so I beckoned Kitty to come, and she climbed up and sat on the wall while Julio came up. Then I quietly pulled up the ladder and lowered it on the garden side. I went down first, and then Kitty. She was a bit excited, I could see, but as game as ever. I had told Julio to wait up on the wall by the ladder till we came back.

"It was about seven o'clock and nearly moonrise when we started on our tour. I took Kitty's hand. She was rather trembly, but she said she meant to see everything there was in this precious garden. I did, too, now we were in. We went along a path by the wall and found a seat. There was no reason for hurrying, so we sat down to wait till the moon was up. It was certainly pretty — especially with Kitty there; there were tall black cypresses, and climbing roses, and orange trees just coming into bloom; and when the moonlight touched the old belfries, and there came the murmuring sound of chanting from some place within the Mission, Kitty whispered to me that the garden really was almost sacred, and I quite agreed with her.

"After a few minutes we went on. The garden is laid out in beds of shrubs and flowers, with winding walks between. We kept in the shade as much as we could, as there were several windows that look on the garden, and some one might see us if we made ourselves conspicuous. But there were lots of trees, and we skirmished about from one to another and had no end of a good time. Kitty was enjoying it immensely, and it did seem a pretty good joke to be dodging about in the old garden right under their noses, for we could see them now and then through the windows. We were standing under a big cypress that had been trimmed up to ten feet or so above the ground, when I remembered my placard. I unfolded it and showed it to Kitty, and then fixed it on the tree with thumb-tacks. Kitty was dancing about with joy at the placard, and almost clapping her hands, but I made her stop for fear some one would hear her.

"We had nearly been all round the garden, taking it easily, and sitting down now and then. We were laughing and joking under our breath, and I was thinking that this would be a good place to propose to her again; rather romantic, you

know, to pop the question under those circumstances. It was getting time to clear out, but we sat down again for a few minutes before we went. Kitty threw the cloak off, and in her white dress and by the moonlight in that old garden, she looked — well, you can imagine — no, you can't, though, no one could who did n't see her. So I up and told her all I wanted to say. The darling took it like an angel, but just out of mischief — I know, for she has said so herself since then — she hummed and hawed and began to talk about different points of view and stuff like that. Well, at that very moment, a door opened and a man, one of the priests, came out. We were sitting in the shadow, but the door was right opposite, and I suppose the bright light coming through the doorway shone on Kitty's white dress. Perhaps he heard us, too, for I guess we had forgotten about talking under our breath: I know I had. Anyhow, he spotted us. We saw him stop for a second and heard him say something to himself, and then he came right toward us. I saw we were in for it, so I caught Kitty by the hand and we ran. I heard the Father, or Brother or whatever they call themselves, coming after us: we could hear his skirts flapping about and I think he must have been a fat man from the way he puffed.

“We were right at the other end of the garden from where the ladder was. Kitty is a good runner, and we had a good lead and were nearly there when suddenly Kitty almost stopped and exclaimed, in a horrified voice, ‘The cloak, Dick! we’ve left it behind, and it has mother’s name on it!’ Whew! that’s a bad mess, I thought. It must be got, that was certain. ‘You run on,’ I told her, ‘and get up the ladder. Do you see it?’ ‘Yes,’ she said, ‘but what about you?’ ‘I’m going back for the cloak,’ I answered. ‘You get up the ladder and wait for me. I’ll stop him following you. Quick, Kitty, hurry up!’ I watched her get to the ladder and then started

back. I didn't know just where the priest was, as we had lost him somewhere among the trees, but I ran back, got the cloak, and started again cautiously for the ladder. When I was halfway there I caught sight of him staring at the placard. I can't understand to this day why he had n't raised a racket. I think that placard must have hypnotized him. Well, he saw me and called to me to stop. As he was between me and the place where the ladder was, I saw I could n't get past him, so I ran back to the other end of the garden again, and he came running after me. When he came to the door I saw him stop a moment and then go in, evidently to get help. That was my time. I sprinted back as fast as I could, for it was getting rather too interesting. Kitty was there all right, sitting on the wall, but I could n't see Julio nor any ladder. 'Dick!' she called down to me, 'I've let the ladder drop down on the other side. Can you get up without it?' 'How on earth did you do that?' I asked. 'I was afraid that horrid monk might come along and see me, and take the ladder away to keep you from getting up,' Kitty said: 'so I pulled it up after me, and then it slipped and went down the other side.' 'Never mind,' I replied, 'I can climb up: but where is Julio?' 'I have n't seen him,' she said: 'but never mind him, come along up.'

"I threw the cloak up to her, and then jumped at the wall to clamber up. I caught the top all right, but the rotten adobe bricks came away, and I tumbled down with half a dozen of them on top of me, and in falling, by the worst kind of luck, I sprained my foot. I tried to get up, but found I could n't stand on the hurt foot. 'What's the matter, Dick?' asked Kitty. 'Sprained foot,' I said. 'I don't see how I'm going to climb up that wall now. I can't jump high enough with one foot, and the adobes would most likely come down again, anyhow. Confound that imp, Julio! he would have saved all this

mess if he had done as I told him. I guess we're trapped, I am, anyway.'

"Every moment I expected to see the Mission people coming, and there was the chance of some one coming along the road, too, and finding Kitty playing Humpty-Dumpty. The poor little thing was nearly crying. 'Oh, Dick,' she said, 'does it hurt much? Oh, I know it must, and it's all my fault. What will they do to us, Dick?' 'Well,' I answered, 'they can't skin us and eat us, you know. I should n't mind about myself, only that it makes a fellow look like a fool. You ought to marry me now, Kitty, for no one else will,' I added, severely. 'Don't you think so?' 'Oh, I suppose so, Dick,' she said, half laughing and half crying, 'No one else will marry me, either, for that matter. I wonder you want to, after my getting you into this fix.' 'All right, darling,' I said: 'it's a bargain, mind. They have n't got us yet, anyhow,' I went on. 'Here they come, though,' as half a dozen petticoated figures issued from the door. I saw them go toward the other end of the garden, where I had last been seen, and begin searching about. 'Now, Kitty,' I told her, 'when they come this way you just let yourself down the other side as far as you can, and then drop. You are lighter than I, and I think the bricks will hold. Then run home as quickly as you can, and lie low.' 'Dick,' the little trump replied, indignantly, 'do you suppose I'm going to run away and let you stand the blame? Do you think I'm one of those putty kind of girls?' I tried to argue with her but — well, you know what suffragists are; she would n't budge. 'Dick,' she exclaimed at last, 'what am I thinking of? I can drop down, as you said, and get the ladder over to you.' I'd thought of that, of course, but I could n't stand the idea of her falling and perhaps getting hurt. 'You must n't do it, Kitty,' I declared. 'If you get hurt as well, we shall be in a worse hole than ever.' My mind was working like lightning,

and suddenly I thought of the cloak. 'Kitty' I said, 'throw the cloak down to me.' It was a good old-fashioned cloak, with yards and yards of stuff in it. I twisted it into a sort of rope, and then stood up against the wall on my good foot and threw the end over as far as I could. 'How far does it reach?' I asked. 'Plenty far enough,' she answered. I did n't need to say any more. She took hold of it and let herself down, and I heard her drop to the ground. In another moment she was up on the wall and pulling the ladder after her. It made an awful row, and I saw some of the people stop and listen. It was touch and go then, I could see. Kitty lowered the ladder, and in half a jiffy I was up. As we were pulling the ladder up, they saw us and began to come on the run, but they were just about half a minute too late. I sent Kitty down and then scrambled down myself. Just then, along came that young scamp Julio, as innocent as you please. 'Take the ladder and run that way,' I ordered, 'and let it drag so as to make lots of noise.'

"Kitty was shaking all over, what with excitement and fright, and pity for my foot. We sat down against the wall and listened to the chaps inside calling us awful names in Spanish, Irish, German, and about everything else. My foot was pretty painful, and so swollen that I could hardly get my shoe off. Kitty produced a bandage from somewhere and bound the foot so as to keep it stiff, and then I got up and with the help of the wall and Kitty's arm I hobbled off with her in the opposite direction from that in which Julio had gone, while the sounds in the garden got fainter and fainter, showing that he was drawing the enemy's fire, as I expected.

"Of course the thing got into the papers somehow, but luckily the names did n't, for Julio did n't get caught. And as you see, Kitty lived up to her bargain."

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